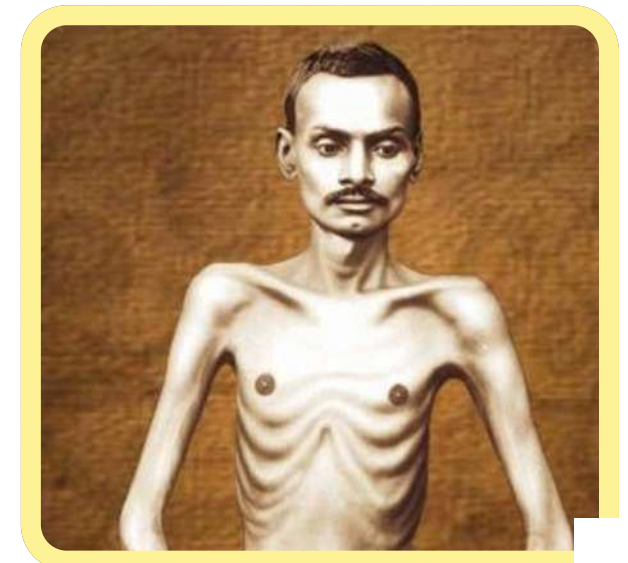
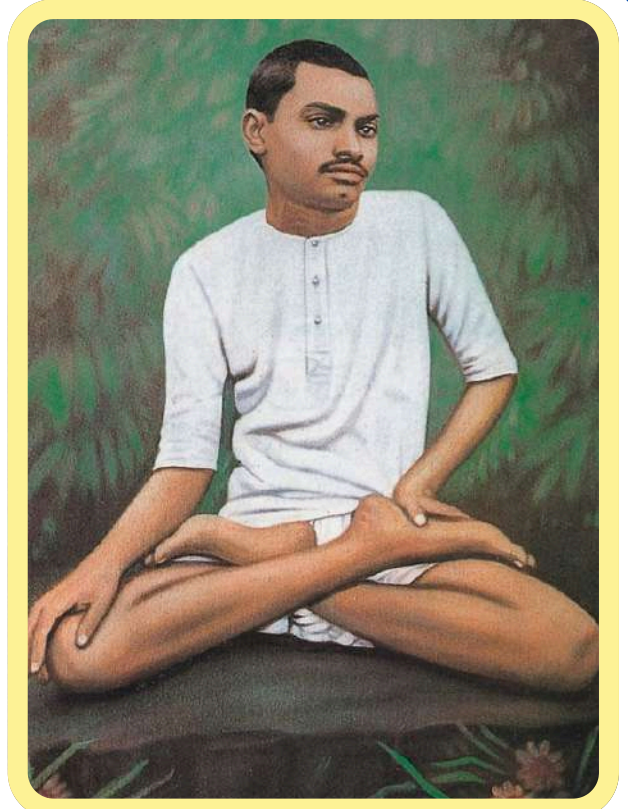
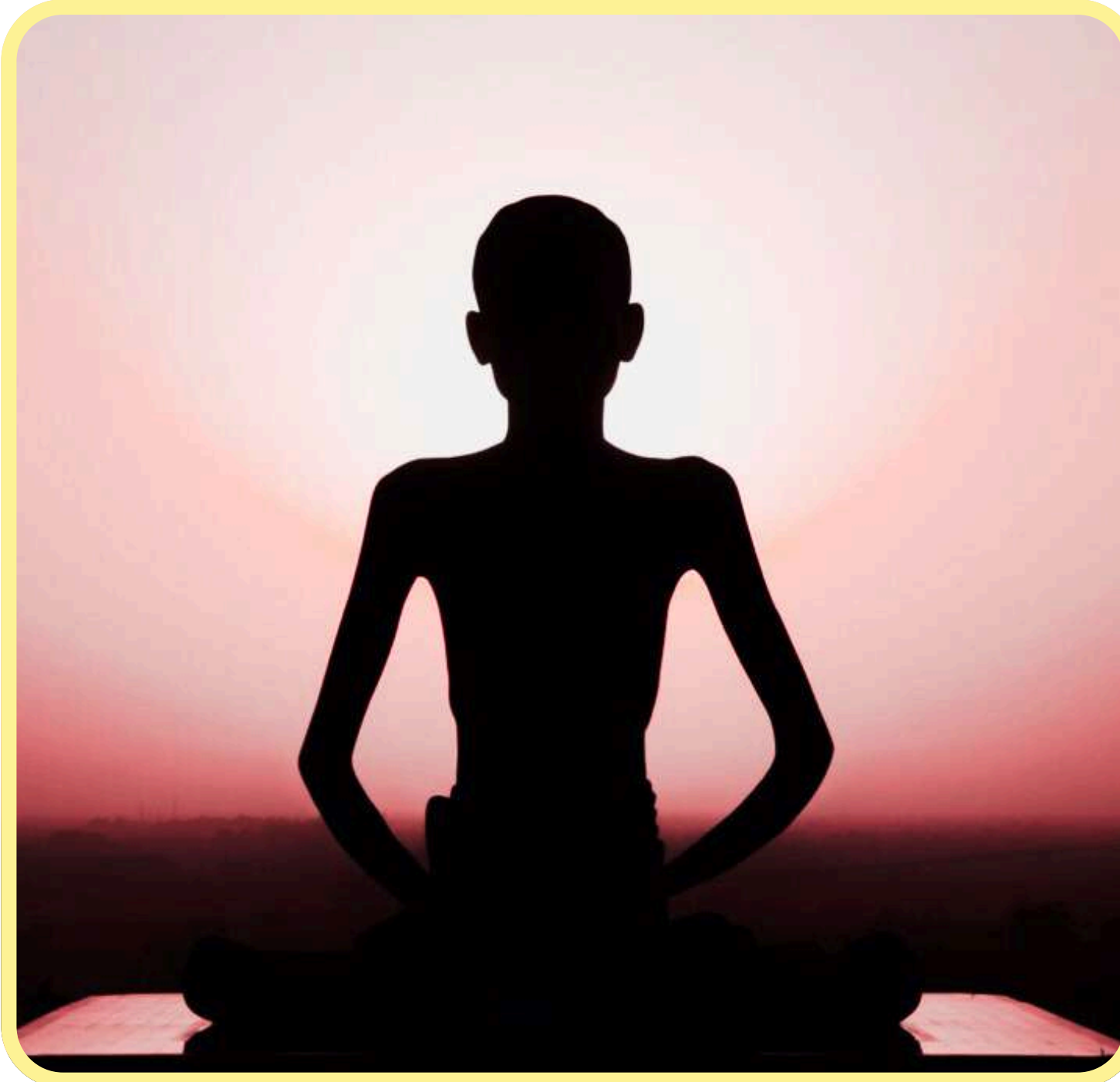


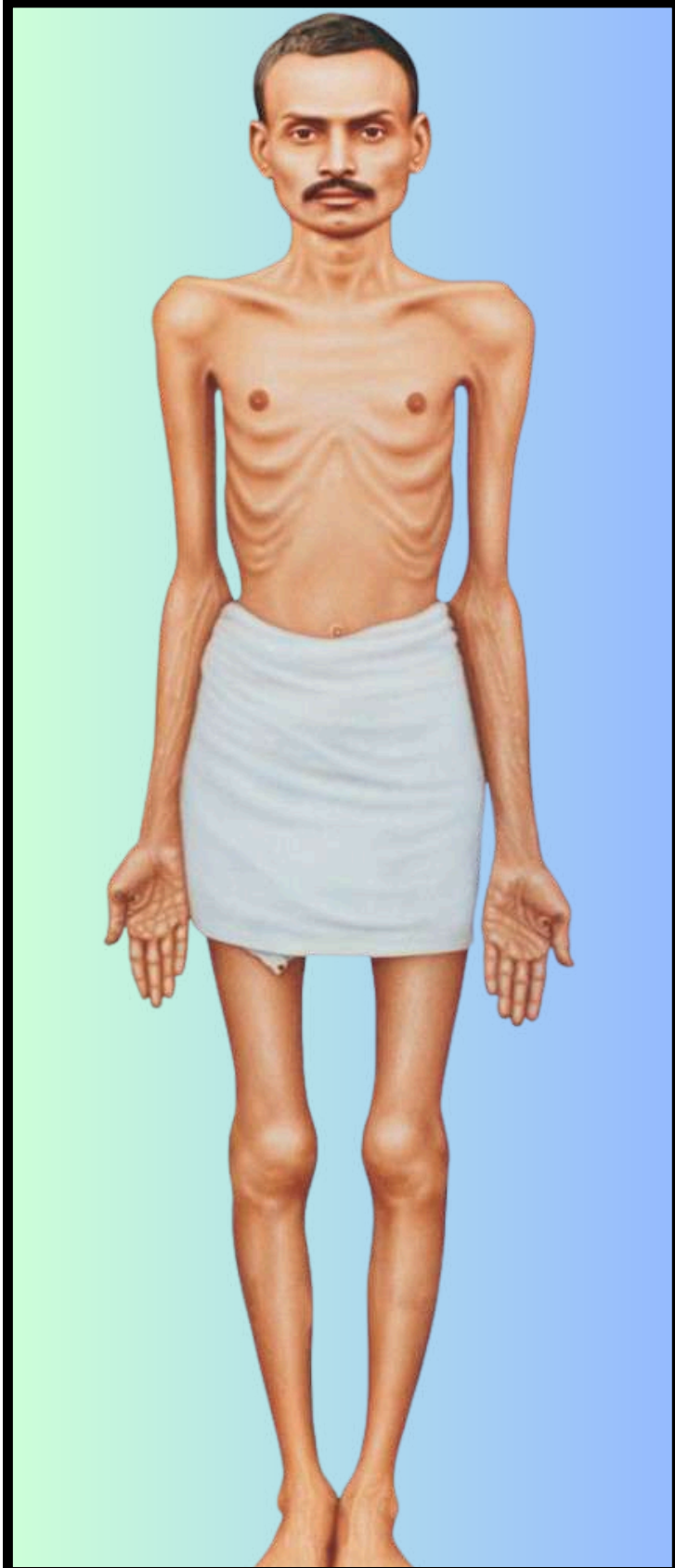
Shrimad Rajchandra

Param Krupalu Dev

Shrimad Rajchandra, also known as **Param Krupalu Dev** by his followers, was one of the most recognised Jain sages of modern times who made significant contributions to Jain philosophy and literature. He was a renowned Jain poet, mystic, philosopher, scholar, social reformer and self-realised saint from India.

He was **born on the auspicious day of Kartik Purnima** in the year Vikram Samvat (VS) 1924 (9 November 1867) in Vavaniya – a village near Morbi, Gujarat. Kartik Purnima is the day that the pilgrimage to the sacred Mount of Shatrunjaya (Palitana) recommences after Chaturmas. This day has seen the birth of many divine souls in India, including one of the greatest of the Jain Acharyas of the past millennia, Acharya Hemchandra.





His mother, Devbai, was a Śvetāmbara Sthanakvasi Jain, and his father, Ravjibhai Mehta, and paternal grandfather, Panchan Mehta, were Vaishnava Hindus, who played a significant role in shaping his spiritual journey. His birth name was Laxminandan, but after four years, his parents renamed him as Raichand. Later his name changed to the Sanskrit form, Rajchandra. Shrimad, an honorific was added by his disciples after his death.

As a child, Rajchandra was deeply interested in reading various books. Once he read the Jain Pratikraman Sutras and was touched by the feelings of kindness to animals and the expression of sincere forgiveness from each other during daily Pratikraman ritual and Paryushan festival. He was drawn closer to the Jain faith because of the emphasis it places on self-knowledge, self-control, penance, renunciation and detachment from worldly affairs, and meditation. As a seeker of ultimate truth, Shrimad concluded that the philosophy and culture of Jain religion was of the highest order of truth and equanimity

At the tender age of seven, Rajchandra claimed to have attained recollection of his past lives. This profound experience, known as 'Jati Smaran Gnaan', was triggered by witnessing the death and cremation of a family acquaintance. This early spiritual awakening marked the beginning of his lifelong quest for self-realisation.

Rajchandra was gifted with a remarkable intellect and an extraordinary memory. He completed seven years of academic study in just two years. His exceptional memory retention and recollection abilities, demonstrated through the performance of Avadhāna, gained him popularity. However, he later discouraged this practice in favour of his spiritual pursuits.

Despite his spiritual inclinations, Rajchandra chose to remain a householder. At the age of 21, he married Zabakben and they had four children together. He ventured into the jewellery business in Mumbai, where he was known for his integrity and conscientious service to his customers.

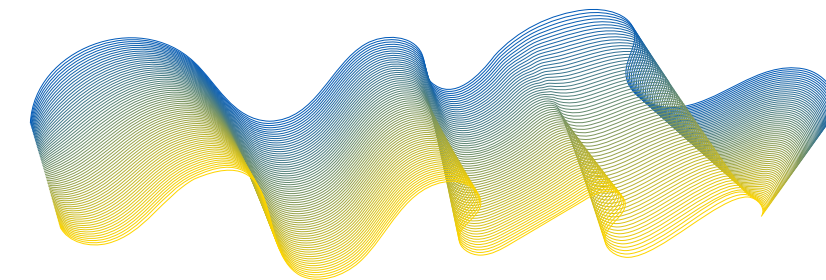


Rajchandra's spiritual journey took a significant turn in his early twenties when he met Shree Saubhagbhai of Sayla. Saubhagbhai introduced him to an ancient and esoteric technique of meditation known as 'Sudharas'. This meeting led to an inflection point in Rajchandra's spiritual ascension. He remained indebted to Saubhagbhai throughout his life, referring to him as his spiritual soulmate.

Rajchandra's magnum opus, 'Atma Siddhi Shastra', is a composition of 142 stanzas explaining the Jain path to liberation. Atma Siddhi, meaning "self-attainment" or "self-realization", propounds six fundamental truths about the soul. It was composed in Nadiad, Gujarat in a single sitting of 90 minutes at the request of Shrimad's close disciple Saubhagbhai, who found it difficult to memorize Shrimad's letter on the six truths in prose form. As Shrimad wrote, his disciple Shri Ambalalbai stood holding a lantern.

Considered a "revolution for all who seek wholeheartedly" and a "masterpiece in philosophical literature", Atma Siddhi enjoys a "near-canonical status" amongst Shrimad Rajchandra's followers. It is revered by spiritual seekers as the "heart of the path" and "nucleus of all scriptures". Besides its spiritual depth, it is also a classic of Gujarati literature, inspiring many translations, commentaries and doctoral studies.

The text is in the form of a dialogue between an enlightened master and an earnest disciple. It elucidates the nature of the soul, karma, reincarnation and the path to self-realization. The six truths expounded are:



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The Six Fundamentals

- 1 The Soul Exists
- 2 The Soul is Eternal
- 3 The Soul is the Doer of Karma
- 4 The Soul is the Bearer of Consequences
- 5 The Soul can be Liberated
- 6 There is a Path to the Soul's Liberation

Sources:

Shrimad Rajchandra – Wikipedia | Life of Shrimad Rajchandra – Colorado State University | Shrimad Rajchandra – Shree Raj Saubhag | Life – Shrimad Rajchandra Mission Dharampur

Rajchandra's spiritual teachings and writings had a profound influence on many, including Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi referred to Rajchandra as his spiritual guide and credited him for shaping his philosophy of non-violence.

Despite his deteriorating health, Shrimad Rajchandra continued to spread his spiritual teachings until his death on 9 April 1901 at the tender age of 33. His life, though brief, left a lasting impact on Jainism and his teachings and writings continue to inspire and guide seekers on the path to spiritual growth and liberation.

